



## Farewell editorial

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**Abstract:** *Biomedical Optics Express* Editor-in-Chief Christoph K. Hitzenberger and Deputy Editor Adam Gibson share some final remarks as they prepare to end their editorial terms on 31 December 2021.

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Having served as Editor-in-Chief and Deputy Editor of *Biomedical Optics Express* (BOEx) for six years, our terms as the leading editors of the journal come to an end. We would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the development of BOEx over the past years and to thank all the people who contributed to the success of the journal.

When we took over from the founding editors, Joseph Izatt and Gregory Faris, the journal was already well established and in a strong position, leading in Impact Factor and time to publication among its competitor journals. We are very pleased to see that six years and 2835 published papers later, BOEx has further consolidated and expanded its leading position among general biomedical optics and biophotonics journals, both in terms of quality and quantity: it is now leading in Impact Factor, size (published papers per year), and in time to publication. Even in the past two difficult years of the Covid pandemic, when other journals struggled with decreasing submission and publication numbers, BOEx experienced a solid growth of 12.5%.

A variety of factors have contributed to this success:

As a spin-off from *Optics Express*, BOEx was an open access journal from its very beginning, facilitating a very broad international readership. Familiar with the format and the speed they had learned to value from their experience with *Optics Express*, the biomedical optics community rapidly embraced our journal. We therefore extend our sincere thanks to the growing number of authors who sent us some of their best manuscripts, setting the high scientific standard of the journal.

Another important factor is our Editorial Board, consisting of highly qualified, diligent scientists who have first-hand experience in their respective field. In recent years, we strived to diversify the Editorial Board in terms of geographical and gender distribution, and with 24% women and 64% of editors from outside the US, this distribution now resembles more closely the distribution of our authors (although further refinements should be made). We sincerely thank all of our editors for their diligent and sometimes strenuous work. The scientific coverage of BOEx was expanded into fields that were previously underrepresented or that are recently emerging: this was achieved by recruiting new Associate Editors with specific expertise in such fields, and/or by publishing feature issues covering such fields, edited by specialized Guest Editors whom we thank for their support.

All the editorial work of Associate and Guest Editors relies heavily on a peer review process that, based on a large pool of expert reviewers, strives to be fast, fair, and to provide supportive feedback to the authors to help them improve their papers. We want to specifically thank all our reviewers for their work which certainly deserves more credit than they usually get.

Finally, it should be noted that editing, reviewing, and publishing would not be possible without the continuous and diligent work behind-the-scenes of Optica Publishing Group professional staff, which deserves our highest appreciation.

Looking into the future and next chapter of BOEx, we would like to welcome Prof. Ruikang (Ricky) Wang, University of Washington, as the incoming Editor-in-Chief, and Prof. Sina Farsiu, Duke University, as the incoming Deputy Editor. Both of them have a long-standing tradition with our journal as authors, reviewers, and Associate Editors. We trust that BOEx will be in good hands, and we encourage all the members of the biomedical optics community to continue supporting our journal under the new leadership.

Christoph K. Hitzengerger  
Retiring Editor-in-Chief

Adam Gibson  
Retiring Deputy Editor